



Our Vision: No Life Limited by Pain

October 7, 2015

Insurance Committee
Representative Tom Leonard, Chair
Michigan House of Representatives
Lansing, Michigan

RE: HB 4935

Dear Representative Leonard and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the American Academy of Pain Management in support of HB 4935, which would make vast improvements to health insurance plans affecting the citizens of Michigan. Specifically, the Academy wishes to support the provisions that relate to the time frames in which insurers must respond to prior authorization requests for prescription drugs.

To expedite the process of prior authorization, the bill would mandate that an insurer must make a determination on coverage for prescription drugs, and notify the enrollee and the enrollee's prescribing physician of the determination, within 72 hours after the insurer receives the request. On a request for an expedited review of coverage for prescription drugs based on exigent circumstances, an insurer shall make a determination, and communicate that determination, within 24 hours after the insurer receives the request. **We urge the passage of HB 4935 as a way reducing inefficiency in the prior authorization process, improving communication between the plan and the prescriber, and protecting patients from unnecessary and ineffective barriers to optimal health care.**

Prior authorization is a case management tool used by third-party payers to control costs and help assure the use of safe and effective tests and treatments. It can be used to permit or limit access to diagnostic tests, procedures, provider visits, or medications. At its best, prior authorization helps protect patients from unnecessary, ineffective, or unsafe medical services; at its worst, the process becomes a significant barrier for patients in obtaining the care their health care provider believes to be best. Oftentimes, response times from payers can be so lengthy that many providers and patients become discouraged and fail to follow the process through to the end; many requests are initially denied; and the amount of time (and therefore, cost) invested by the health care provider and his or her staff can be substantial.

We believe that the provisions of HB 4935 help promote the positive aspects of prior authorization, while minimizing the adverse outcomes that are common in the current system. Accordingly, we urge the committee to improve the process of prior authorization in Michigan by voting to advance HB

4935. I am happy to discuss this issue with you if necessary. Please feel free to contact me by email at btwillman@aapainmanage.org, or by telephone at 209-288-2210.

About the Academy: The American Academy of Pain Management is the premier organization for all clinicians who care for people with pain. It is the largest pain management organization in the nation and the only one that embraces, as part of its mission statement, an integrative model of care, which: is patient-centered; considers the whole person; encourages healthful lifestyle changes as part of the first line of treatment to restore wellness; is evidence-based; brings together all appropriate therapeutic approaches to reduce pain and achieve optimal health and healing; and, encourages a team approach.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Twillman, PhD".

Robert Twillman, Ph.D., FAPM

Executive Director

American Academy of Pain Management